CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A consumable order assistance system for computer peripheral devices, comprising:

a personal computer having a web browser and a messaging system;

at least one computer peripheral device having a messaging system;

a communication link signal coupling the personal computer with a provider of a consumable for the computer peripheral device via the web browser; and

a consumable order assistance computer program provided on the personal computer and configured to receive a notification from the computer peripheral device via the messaging system of a need to order a consumable, alert a user of the personal computer of the notification, and provide an order location to the user for the consumable.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the consumable order assistance computer program is further configured to collect a series of notifications and summarize the series of notifications for one or more computer peripheral devices.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein the consumable order assistance computer program consolidates a plurality of notifications from the at least one computer peripheral device.

4. The system of claim 1 wherein the consumable order assistance computer program is further configured to request identification from a user to verify authorization of the user to submit an order.

1   5.   The system of claim 1 wherein the consumable order

2   assistance computer program is further configured to request at least one level

3   of authorization from a user before sending an order via the communication link

4   to a provider of the consumable.

1   6.   The system of claim 1 wherein the consumable order

2   assistance computer program is further configured to provide an electronic

3   shopping cart data list that enables electronic ordering of the consumable from

4   one of a list of providers of the consumable.

1   7.   The system of claim 1 wherein the consumable order

2   assistance computer program is further configured to prompt a customer user

3   for authorization information.

1   8.   The system of claim 1 wherein the communication link

2   comprises an electronic communication link that enables the consumable order

3   assistance computer program to submit an e-mail order.

1   9.   The system of claim 1 wherein the communication link

2   comprises an electronic communication link that enables the consumable order

3   assistance computer program to submit a facsimile order.

1   10.   A computer-implemented system which implements a

2   program in which consumable components of computer peripheral devices are

3   replenished, the system comprising:

4   a notification system that alerts a user of a personal computer that

5   they need to order a consumable for a computer peripheral device associated

6   with the personal computer;

7   a facilitation system that provides a communication link with a

8   provider of the consumable; and

9   at least one from a list of a consolidation system for consolidating

10   a plurality of orders, an authorization system for confirming that a user is

11   authorized to place and order for the consumable, and an order assistance

12   system that places an order for the consumable.

1   11.   The system of claim 10 wherein the notification system

2   identifies for the user a part number for a consumable that needs to be ordered

3   for the computer peripheral device.

1   12.   The system of claim 10 wherein the notification system

2   comprises a messaging system within an embedded web server of a computer

3   peripheral device and a messaging system within a personal computer.

1   13.   The system of claim 12 wherein the personal computer

2   further comprises a browser, and the messaging system comprises an e-mail

3   application, wherein the computer peripheral device sends an e-mail notification

4   to the personal computer to alert a user to a need to order a consumable.

1   14.   The system of claim 13 wherein the e-mail notification

2   identifies the consumable by a part number.

1   15.   The system of claim 10 wherein the system comprises the

2   consolidation system configured to aggregate a plurality of notifications for one

3   or more computer peripheral devices.

1   16.   The system of claim 10 wherein the system comprises the

2   authorization system configured to request authorization from a user prior to

3   automatically submitting an order for the consumable to a provider of the

4   consumable.

1   17.   The system of claim 10 wherein the system comprises the

2   order assistance system configured to automatically submit an order for the

3   consumable in response to receiving a notification that a consumable needs to

4   be ordered.

1   18.   A method of providing order assistance, comprising:

2   providing a computer peripheral device, a personal computer

3   having a communication link with a provider of a consumable, and a messaging

4   system extending between the computer peripheral device and the personal

5   computer;

6   detecting a need to replenish a consumable at the computer

7   peripheral device;

8   notifying a user at the personal computer of the need to replenish

9   the consumable;

10   providing an order address location to a user for a provider of the

11   consumable; and

12   placing an order for the consumable with the provider using the

13   personal computer.

1   19.   The method of claim 18 wherein placing the order

2   comprises automatically placing the order for the consumable in response to

3   notifying the user.

1   20.   The method of claim 18 wherein, prior to placing an order,

2   querying a user to authorize placing the order with an identified provider.